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# SCAM

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Volume 33, No. 4

April, 2015

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# ***SPACE COAST AREA MENSA***

Website: [www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org](http://www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org)

(All Area Codes are 321 except as noted)



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***All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 10th of the month preceding publication.*** Please allow extra time for mailed submissions, which may be **typed** or **legibly handwritten**. Whenever possible, we prefer submissions via e-mail. They may be in e-mail text or any of most **word processing** formats. **All submissions should be sent to the Editor**, whose contact information appears on Page 2.

## *Inside the Pocket Protector*

*Mike Moakley, Editor*

**A**pril already. Easter (for those so inclined) is now upon us. Perhaps we could have a chocolate-bunny-eating contest. For those among us who have entrepreneurial inclinations, there might be a market for “bunny ears” (the first thing that disappears when eating a chocolate bunny).

April also heralds an end to yet another Tax Season, so if you venture to one of our Post Offices on the night of the 15th, be prepared to be entertained by the inevitable tax protestors in their Grim Reaper outfits as they burn Obama(care) in effigy.

April 15th has not been lost on those of us here at *The SCAM*. In this issue, you will see our own Art Belefant comment in his column on our government’s tax policies. Regardless of whether you agree with his view, it is well worth the read.

On all things Mensa, please be sure you have renewed your membership. If your membership lapses, this may be your last newsletter (the membership year ends March 31). Please be sure to check your member profile, especially to ensure your method of newsletter delivery accurately reflects your wishes.

One final item: ExComm elections are around the corner. Once a new ExComm is seated, the first order of business is to make all necessary appointments, including that of Editor.

I am announcing here and now that, should the new ExComm desire, I am willing to serve another term as Editor of *The SCAM*.

**The SCAM sells classified ad space.** SCAM members, non-commercial, no charge. Others: \$20 full page; \$10 half-page; \$5 quarter-page per month, we offer discounts for multiple insertions, and we can help with layout and design.

**Subscriptions:** SCAM members, included in dues; others, **\$10** for 12 issues.

**I can remember** Oprah pushing a wheelbarrow full of yellow goo onto the stage that represented the weight she had lost. It was absolutely disgusting. *(I do not watch Oprah!)*

After I had lost approximately 10 pounds I thought,----How could I show off my dieting success? *Yellow goo?---No!---*But---how about something whole-some like chicken or even a small turkey that I could attach to my body. Dieters could see it and immediately connect and appreciate it.

It couldn't be a live chicken or turkey. Oh no! That wouldn't work at all but, cooked?

Hey! Now we're getting somewhere. I could do that-----

Well folks, I've given up on that crazy turkey idea. Can you imagine a grown person walking around with a delicious, mouth-watering, rotisserie broiled or baked turkey duct taped to their stomach? I certainly can't! It's just too radical! You'd have to be bonkers, coo-coo, whacko! And not only that, you'd have to carry a carving knife with you wherever you went. Now, how silly would that look? Homeless people and dogs would follow you around and want to be your friend while others might think you're the meals-on-heels guy or an undercover C.I.A. agent posing as a conscientious dieter with a plan. And besides that, it wouldn't reflect your correct weight loss since your weight is going in one direction while the delicious, mouth-watering, rotisserie broiled or baked turkey is going in another as you slab off a snack now and then. Wow! How stupid can one person be?

Bologna, I say! That's right, delicious carbohydrate free bologna! One pound packages will work just fine. Just think of the advantages. As you lose more weight you can just attach a few more slices to reflect the loss or eat a delicious carbohydrate free slice from time to time to ward off those annoying hunger pangs. One pound packages of individual snack sized pieces of delicious carbohydrate free bologna could easily be duct taped under your outer wear, thereby keeping the would-be bologna pick-pockets or undercover, switch-happy, turkey carrying C.I.A. agents at bay. And, if you had the need to gloat, it would be easy to lift your shirt and expose your secret to your astonished friends. I want to warn you though to stock up as much as you can. Bologna will not be around forever. Smoke-y-Links are rapidly taking over the road-kill meat market and switching to them would require a totally different strategy and just how crazy would that be anyway? Smoke-y-Links are shaped like miniature hot dogs and anyone who duct tapes full sized or miniature hot dogs to their body must be getting instructions from the "Giant Head". I have never, ever seen or

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**W**ith all its power to write taxes, it is surprising that our government resorts to deceptions to increase our tax liabilities when they could just raise our taxes. Here are two.

**1. Withholding Tax**

This year, in addition to the usual scams that cheat the taxpayer of part of his income, we now have the increased possibility of scammers accessing your tax returns and claiming your tax refunds. According to the Wall Street Journal, there were \$5.8 billion estimated fraudulent refunds the IRS paid in 2013. This year it will be much more. If the IRS cannot recover those fraudulent payouts, and it is unlikely that they will be able to recover much, if not, all of those funds, it is the honest taxpayer that must cover those losses.

Taxes must be withheld from the wages of all employees with some exceptions. The amount withheld is determined by a formula or chart promulgated by the IRS. It usually exceeds the taxable amount on the wage earners income resulting in refunds that are now subject to the tax fraud scammers. This is deliberate cheating by our IRS. The excess tax that one pays in withholding is your money, not the IRS's. Yet they will not pay it to you unless you ask for it on you income tax form 1040. It is a no interest loan to the IRS that you can get repaid only by applying for it if it has not already been given to some tax fraud scammer. You are not paid interest on the overpayment. Yet, if you underpay your withholding tax you are subject to interest and other penalties. The best way to avoid being cheated by the IRS or exposing your self to scammers is to adjust your withholding so that you have no refund coming to you at the end of the tax year.

There are several legal ways to do that, none are easy. Check the web.

This form of cheating by the government generally applies to only the middle class of taxpayers. Those that do not have wages or other income subject to withholding can usually avoid this gambit, which means the very wealthy and the very poorest persons who have no wages.

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**THE PLAN**

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heard of anyone in the last two or three months in Gladwin who duct taped Smokey Links to his body and believe me, there are some real whackos in this county.

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## 2. Capital Gains

Another form of cheating by our government is capital gains. This doesn't affect most of us taxpayers who, like me, have no capital gains to declare. However, it is so insidious, that it must be addressed.

If you purchase an investment, say for \$10,000 and years later sell it for \$15,000, according to the IRS you have a capital gain of \$5,000 and are taxed on that amount. When you bought that investment, you could have, instead, spent that money on wine, women, and song. Years later, when you sell that investment for \$15,000, you find that, because of inflation, the \$15,000 buys only the same amount of wine, women, and song that the \$10,000 would have bought when you purchased that investment. Inflation has eaten into that investment. If inflation was exactly equal to your increase of investment, you would still be liable for a \$5,000 capital gain. Of course, that is illogical. There has been no capital gain. You can purchase no more now with the \$15,000 than you could have bought with the \$10,000 then. What has happened isn't inflation, but devaluation of the dollar. Why should you pay a tax on a decrease in the dollar's value when that is solely and arbitrarily mandated by government policy?

## A Mensan in the family?

**A**re you the Mensan in your family? Or, is your spouse, child, parent or sibling the Mensan in your household? Are two or more (maybe all) in your household Mensans? If any of these apply, The SCAM is soliciting an article from *you*. All members of SCAM or family members are invited to respond. What are your impressions and experiences?

**W**ell, another month has come and gone. This is a slow time of the year for SCAM. We're well off of a busy holiday season, and have not yet come into the time of year that so much goes on within SCAM. Coming up shortly we have elections, both local and national financial audits, and the missives from the home office are starting to come out.

The latest missive from national is a document that clarifies the relationship between our local chapter and national. I'm to share this with our ExComm and lead a discussion on it. The problem is that during the normally scheduled ExComm meeting for April, I will be partaking of a well deserved vacation.

We have to open our cabin for the season, and I'm not looking forward to what we are likely to find after having left the cabin locked in the woods for many months. Just to put my fears in perspective, the last time we left a trailer locked in the woods there for 6 weeks, a tiny mouse had found a way in, made a nest to end all nests out of six rolls of toilet paper we had left behind, and chewed through some water lines in the walls, resulting in a nicely flooded trailer. One mouse, six weeks. The mind boggles at what awaits us this time.

That seems to be the price you pay for being stream (or creek) side. It's a small sliver of land between the road and the creek, but has 805 feet of creek frontage. Sitting on the deck, watching the fireflies flit through the clearing in the trees while listening to the creek gurgle makes all the expense and work worth it.

I hope you get a chance to enjoy your spring. I'll be thinking of all my Mensa friends while I watch the sun go down over the mountains. Peace be with you.

### A Mensan in the Workplace?

**A**re you the Mensan at work? Do you work with other Mensans...or...are you the only one? If the latter is true, do your coworkers know you're in Mensa? What about your boss? What are your impressions and experiences at work? Do you have a leadership position? Do you serve in any kind of "support" (formal or informal) role? Does your status as a Mensan have a positive or negative impact on your work relationships? Finally, if preparing a resume, would you include your Mensa membership as an item (or would you state that you qualified to join Mensa)? Why or why not? Let's hear from *you*.

# April 2015

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	C.A.B.A.G.E.		1	2		4 GO!
5	6		8	9	10	
12	13	14	15	16	17	
19	20	21	22	23	24	
26	27	28	29	30		

## SCAM Calendar of Events for April 2015

### 3rd - Friday 6:00 PM

#### FIRST FRIDAY AT HOOTERS SIG

Come join us for drinks, open discussion and food (latter two optional) at the Melbourne Hooter's, 877 S. Babcock Street. **Hosted by:** *Dennis Logan, 501-7547.*

### 14th - Saturday 6:00 PM

#### MONTHLY MENSA GET-TOGETHER

Mix and mingle with Mensans in Melbourne at the Red Ginger Restaurant at the Melbourne Square Mall, 1700 W. New Haven Ave.

Hosted by: *Joe Janson, 338-5833.*

### 18th - Saturday 6:00 PM

#### SALON

Come join us at George and Barbara's, 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic, for an evening of "enlightened ?" discussion. 6 PM til whenever.

Hosted by: *G. & B, Patterson 474-4074,5 or george314159@gmail.com*

### 25th - Saturday 5:45 PM

#### S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some Japanese cuisine at The SCAM's best attended event at our new venue, **Hioki's**, 3200 NE Dixie Hwy. (US 1) in Palm Bay. It is about 2 miles south of US 192. **Contact:** *George, 474-4075 for details.*

#### EXCOMM MEETING

**Tuesday, Apr. 7** at 6:00 pm. This is our monthly business meeting. See back page for location.

#### MENSA TESTING

**Apr. 18** at Central Brevard Library, 308 Forrest Ave., Cocoa. Please arrive by 9:45 am, as testing begins at 10 am. \$40 fee and photo ID required. Reservations encouraged but not required. Candidates must be age 14 or older. Next month, testing will be held May 16.

**Contact:** Hank Rhodes, [mensatest@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mensatest@cfl.rr.com).

#### Of CABAGES and Coffee: (Our Regular Events)

**C.A.B.A.G.E.: Every Monday in the Food Court**, Merritt Square Mall  
**Host:** Karen Freiberg, 633-1636  
**6 p.m.**

**GO! Every Saturday at Books-A-Million**, The Avenue, Viera. Hosted by  
the **Space Coast Area GO Association.**

**Host:** George Lebovitz,  
[the.rokkitsci@rocketmail.com](mailto:the.rokkitsci@rocketmail.com)

## Membership Notes for April 2015

### **WELCOME TO SCAM AND MENSA**

Michael Vialpando

### **WELCOME BACK!**

Roberta Brock

### **APRIL BIRTHDAY GREETINGS**

3rd	Gregory Ashburn	21st	Carol Schoff Lane
3rd	George Lebovitz	21st	Richard Ward
3rd	Beth Rutenber	23rd	Mary Ellen Donahue
4th	Michael Freeman	24th	Raymond Bahr III
5th	Douglas Solomon	28th	Clifford Miller
8th	Adam Cherwinski		
11th	Debra Saltzberg		
13th	Donald Sheppard		
19th	James Dace		



### **The "Fine Print" for Calendar Events:**

Membership in American Mensa, Ltd. makes you eligible to attend SCAM social functions. Escorted and invited guests of a member or host are welcome. Adult family members of Mensans are encouraged to participate in SCAM activities, as are well behaved children. However, attendance at any social function in a **private home** is subject to the hospitality of the host. Compliance with published house rules is required, and "Kitty" payment is **not optional**. As a courtesy, notify the host if you plan to attend. Announced hosts should attend their events or arrange for a stand-in if unable. When reservations are required, you may not be able to participate if you fail to call.

**S-Smoking; NS- No Smoking; SS-Separate Smoking Area; P-Pets in the home; NP-No Pets present; BYO\_-Bring Your Own: \_Snacks, \_Drinks, \_Everything.**

**M**ensa seems to have lost its way as an organization. This election offers us an unusual opportunity to examine who we think we are, where we want to be and who we shall choose to lead us toward our goals. Happily, these days it is relatively easy for members to get a sense of what's been going on. Just click on a few links, scroll down to the referenced articles and – voila – enlightenment!

“Here's the central question for Mensa's national election this year  
– **Is Mensa a club or is Mensa a business?**” (1)

### **Fix Mensa's Finances**

One reason for the incessant push to increase dues is the Equity Restoration program necessitated by the Inpharmatica trademark lawsuit initiated by the AMC in 2009. Few members are aware of this huge deficit; AMC actions taken at the March 2014 meeting could cause this important element of Mensa's internal finances to slip quietly off the radar. (2)(4)

We can – and must – do better when preparing and administering our budgets. (2)(3)(7)

### **Fix the American Mensa Committee (AMC)**

“[Actions were] taken last year by the AMC, in violation of American Mensa Bylaws, to restrict [the National Ombudsman] from having the same information as AMC members.” (4)

“Some members have mentioned perceived disparities between the current AML bylaws and the process of the [AMC].” (5)

Chairman Burg's “dismissive response to comments from concerned members, display[ed] an unfortunate lack of leadership on the part of the person who was elected to lead American Mensa.” (6)

Two proposed bylaws amendments address “problematic conduct on the part of the AMC.” (7)

### **Fix the National Office (NO)**

The NO has experienced:

“[a] steady loss of senior staff members under increasingly unpleasant circumstances... over-budget expenditures year after year...poorly-planned campaign roll-outs, increasing reliance on... paid outsourcing firms instead of Mensa volunteers” (8) and

significant flaws in the processes and practices necessary for maintenance

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and upgrades to our technology systems. (9)

The Co-Chairs reported significant problems with NO staff and outside consultants while organizing the 2014 Boston AG. (4)

Despite this, Executive Director Donahoo was granted a salary increase.

### **In Conclusion**

Ultimately, we members are responsible for Mensa. The AMC and National Office staff are empowered – by us – to handle our money and conduct the business of Mensa. Our club is currently headed in a less-than-brilliant direction. The candidates and bylaws amendments you vote for will affect whether we continue along the same path or change direction. When we ask questions, we must insist on meaningful answers. An informed vote is an *intelligent* vote.

### **References:**

Rich Olcott, "Mensa Elections, National and Local," *Memphis Mensa Newsletter*, Dec 2014, p.10

Cam Smart, RVC2, "Smart M-Talk," *Penn Central*, May 2014, p.2

Alison Brown, "AML Election Issues – Fiscal," *MIND*, Feb 2014, p.19

Mike Eager, *LocSec Column*, August 2014

Cam Smart, RVC2, "Smart M-Talk," *Magniloquence*, Nov 2014, p.4

Mike Eager, LocSec Column, *SFRM Intelligencer*, Jan 2015, p.3

Mike Eager, LocSec Column, *SFRM Intelligencer*, Dec 2014, p.3

Rich Olcott, "Uproar at the National Office," *Memphis Mensa Newsletter*, Oct 2014, p.7

Mike Eager, "LocSec Column: American Mensa IT," *SFRM Intelligencer*, Feb 2015, p.3

This Page is RESERVED:

JUST  
FOR  
YOU

We want to hear from YOU...!

See Page Three of every issue for  
SCAM submittal guidelines.

**C**oming up in April, Central Florida Mensa will be running one of the most ambitious promotional events we've ever had in Region 10. On the week-end of April 10-12, they'll be operating a booth at MegaCon, the Southeast region's largest fandom convention. This is a marvelous targeted marketing opportunity, and since they have visitors from all over the state of Florida (and beyond), they'll be talking up testing sessions in almost all of the chapters in our Region.

Later in the month, many of our chapters will be fielding CultureQuest teams on Sunday, April 26. Across the country teams of up to five members will compete in answering questions about cultural knowledge (not trivia), with cash prizes to the highest scoring teams. Want to get a taste of the questions? Go to [www.us.mensa.org/attend/culturequest/culturequestion-of-the-day](http://www.us.mensa.org/attend/culturequest/culturequestion-of-the-day) to receive a daily example from previous contests.

Northwest Florida Mensa held a strategic planning session in February, and Tampa Bay Mensa did the same in March, where member of their groups ran through a planning guide to determine strengths and weaknesses of several of the programs that are provided by the chapters. These sorts of self-evaluations are greatly beneficial, and help the groups to determine where they can best spend their resources. I hope that some of the other groups will also take advantage of this process.

Coming up on Memorial Day weekend, Tampa Bay Mensa will kick off the summer with their "Margarita Bay" Regional Gathering in Oldsmar, on the north end of the bay in Oldsmar. Last year's RG was very well received, and this year they will be taking over the entire hotel! Visit [www.tampa.us.mensa.org](http://www.tampa.us.mensa.org) and click on the owl for details and to register. They also have a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/222609511232064/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/222609511232064/) where program updates are provided frequently.

Bookending the summer, Broward Mensa will be holding their "FloRanGe 2015 – Another Excuse to Eat Chocolate!" gathering on Labor Day weekend. They also have a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/M.FLoRanGe/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/M.FLoRanGe/). More details will be provided for that event as it grows closer.

As I write this column, I am preparing for the American Mensa Board of Directors meeting, which will be (was) held in Indianapolis on Saturday, March 21. The reason that location was chosen was to give us an opportunity to tour the site of the 2016 Annual Gathering, but the main focus of the meeting is expected to be the 2015-2016 Budget. I expect to have more to report on that later.

*Thomas George Thomas*

**Minutes of the March, 2015 ExComm Meeting**

**T**he ExComm met at the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955, on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, called to order by LocSec Wynn Rostek at 6:11 pm.

**Members Present:** Wynn Rostek, Joe Janson, and Karen Freiberg.

**(Honored) Guests:** Doug Starke and George Patterson.

**Officer/Committee Reports** (details may be found in the footnotes):

**Treasurer's Report:** The February report was not available at the time of the meeting.

**Testing:** Testing coordinator, Hank Rhodes, reported via email<sup>1</sup>.

George Patterson intends to begin calling SCAM members to try to obtain email addresses in anticipation of offering the option to receive the SCAM electronically in lieu of a mailed hard copy and also – in his capacity of Membership Chair – to ask if they would be willing to participate in a survey. Permission to do so was moved by Joe, seconded by Karen, and approved.

The minutes of the February, 2015 minutes as published in the SCAM were approved.

The March 14<sup>th</sup> General Meeting (long past by the time you are reading this) at Red Ginger in the Melbourne Square Mall, will feature The Pet Psychic, who is offering to do “readings” of your pet from a photograph!

The April 11<sup>th</sup> General Meeting will probably be only dinner since we don't wish to exhaust our potential speaker pool too quickly. The May 9<sup>th</sup> General Meeting will tentatively feature Joe speaking about drones.

Joe and Dennis found a place, Crispy's Beer & Wine Bar (604 Barnes Blvd. Rockledge FL 32955) that conducts well-attended trivia contests every Tuesday; however, Karen and Doug found the establishment to be extremely loud.

George is going to reach out to Art Belefant to ask if he would be willing to serve on the NomElComm for the upcoming ExComm elections.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 6:00 pm in the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm.

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<sup>1</sup> *Contacted 5 candidates for the first time, 12 candidate for the second or third time; tested 2. Next test session will be Saturday, March 21st, 2013 at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa.*